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The Office Action mailed November 14, 2003 has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks are made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-78 are pending in this application. Claims 1-72 stand rejected. Claims 1, 11, 19, 26, 28, 38, 46, 53, 55, 62, 64, 66, and 71 have been amended. Claims 73-78 have been newly added. No new matter has been added. A fee calculation sheet is submitted herewith for newly added Claims 73-78.

The rejection of Claims 1-6, 9-11, 13, 16, 18-23, 25-33, 36-38, 40, 43, 45-50, 52-59, 61-68, and 70-72 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Storch et al. (U.S. Patent 5,920,846) is respectfully traversed.

Storch et al. describe a Work Force Administration/Dispatch Out (WFA/DO) computer data processing system (270) that continuously inputs information into a computer memory of Due Date Availability System (DUDAS 266) for each service order that the WFA/DO receives, indicating the amount of time required to work and complete each service order for each day (column 55, lines 39-45). The DUDAS calculates and data processes this information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time (column 55, lines 45-50). If a qualified technician is available for service installation for a particular date and/or time, the DUDAS transmits a message to a Service Order Processor (SOP 268) indicating the technician is available and the time is open (column 55, lines 50-53). If a technician is not available for a date and/or time, the DUDAS inputs a message to the SOP indicating that the specific date or time is not available (i.e., closed for appointments) (column 55, lines 53-56).

Claim 1 recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the method including "obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment; automatically providing to the user, from

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whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being; determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer”.

Storch et al. does not describe or suggest a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the method including obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment, automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, Storch et al. does not describe or suggest determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe calculating and data processing the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al.

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Claims 2-6, 9-11, 13, 16, and 18 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-6, 9-11, 13, 16, and 18 are considered in combination with the

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recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-6, 9-11, 13, 16, and 18 likewise are patentable over Storch et al.

Claim 19 recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the method including "obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being; determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

Storch et al. does not describe or suggest a method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the method including obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

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Moreover, Storch et al. does not describe or suggest determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe calculating and data processing the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al.

Claims 20-23 and 25-27 depend from independent Claim 19. When the recitations of Claims 20-23 and 25-27 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 19, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 20-23 and 25-27 likewise are patentable over Storch et al.

Claim 28 recites a system for enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the system including "at least one processor adapted to obtain product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment; and said at least one processor adapted to: provide to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information; determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

Storch et al. does not describe or suggest a system for enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the system including at least one processor adapted to obtain product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment, and the at least one processor adapted to provide to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, determine whether the product is serviced

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by a manufacturer of the product, and determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, Storch et al. does not describe or suggest at least one processor adapted to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe the DUDAS that calculates and data processes the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 28 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al.

Claims 29-33, 36-38, 40, 43, and 45 depend from independent Claim 28. When the recitations of Claims 29-33, 36-38, 40, 43, and 45 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 28, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 29-33, 36-38, 40, 43, and 45 likewise are patentable over Storch et al.

Claim 46 recites a system for enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the system including "means for obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; means for providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein the means for providing provides without interaction between the user and any other human being; means for determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and means for determining whether the product is serviced

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by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer”.

Storch et al. does not describe or suggest a system for enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the system including means for obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, means for providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where the means for providing provides without interaction between the user and any other human being, means for determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and means for determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, Storch et al. does not describe or suggest means for determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and means for determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe the DUDAS that calculates and data processes the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 46 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al.

Claims 47-50 and 52-54 depend from independent Claim 46. When the recitations of Claims 47-50 and 52-54 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 46, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 47-50 and 52-54 likewise are patentable over Storch et al.

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Claim 55 recites at least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of enabling scheduling a service call, the method including "obtaining product information regarding a product from a user; automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, a plurality of available appointments for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being; determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

Storch et al. does not describe or suggest at least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of enabling scheduling a service call, the method including obtaining product information regarding a product from a user, automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, a plurality of available appointments for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, Storch et al. does not describe or suggest determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe calculating and data processing the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new

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requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 55 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al.

Claims 56-59 and 61-63 depend from independent Claim 55. When the recitations of Claims 56-59 and 61-63 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 55, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 56-59 and 61-63 likewise are patentable over Storch et al.

Claim 64 recites an article of manufacture including "at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising: computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information; computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

Storch et al. does not describe or suggest an article of manufacture including at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance, the computer readable program code means in the article of manufacture including computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the

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product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, Storch et al. does not describe or suggest computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe the DUDAS that calculates and data processes the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time. For the reasons set forth above, Claim 64 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al.

Claims 65-68 and 70-72 depend from independent Claim 64. When the recitations of Claims 65-68 and 70-72 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 64, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 65-68 and 70-72 likewise are patentable over Storch et al.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-6, 9-11, 13, 16, 18-23, 25-33, 36-38, 40, 43, 45-50, 52-59, 61-68, and 70-72 be withdrawn.

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The rejection of Claims 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, 44, 51, 60, and 69 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Storch et al. in view of "GE Answer Center" that includes articles "GEA: Making Things Happen-Consumer Friendly", referred to herein as reference A, "Connected to Consumers", referred to herein as reference B, "Benefiting from the 'Net'", referred to herein as reference C, and "GE Answers Call to Evolve 10-Year-Old Help Line", referred to herein as reference D, is respectfully traversed.

Storch et al. is described above. Reference A describes the GE Answer Center that expected one million calls per year when it opened its doors 10 years ago with 25 customer service representatives (Abstract). Today, the center's 225 reps field approximately 3.6 million calls annually (Abstract). The Answer Center also operates as a profit center by increasing brand commitment, reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls (page 2, section 2).

Reference B describes that GE Consumer Service encompasses a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty (page 1).

Reference C describes a 16-year-old, Louisville KY-based consumer-product-oriented General Electric Co (GE) Answer Center operates 24 hours a day to field people's questions about their appliances (Abstract). Roughly 45% of the inquiries it now receives arrive via the Web, helping call centers gain a competitive edge (Abstract).

Reference D describes a General Electric Co (GE) Answer Center (Louisville, Kentucky) that eliminates the frustrating customer service runaround by offering one-call customer service (Abstract). Behind the effectiveness of the GE Answer Center is a text database containing more than one million problem-resolution responses (Abstract). Any of these can be called up in less than 2 seconds (Abstract). The system also contains continually updated files of product, dealer, service, parts, and merchandising information (Abstract). If a fix requires a trained service technician, a caller is switched

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directly to a GE Service Center, where he can schedule an appointment if he desires (page 2, section 1).

References A, B, C, and D describe GE Answer Center and therefore, as used herein, GE Answer Center refers collectively to references A, B, C, and D.

Claims 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 17 depend from independent Claim 1 which recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the method including "obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment; automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being; determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

None of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the method including obtaining product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment, automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, none of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest determining

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whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe calculating and data processing the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time, reference A describes reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls, reference B describes encompassing a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty, reference C describes receiving inquiries via the Web, and reference D describes switching a caller directly to the GE Service Center if a fix requires a trained service technician.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

When the recitations of Claims 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 17 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, and 17 likewise are patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

Claim 24 depends from independent Claim 19 which recites a method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the method including "obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being; determining whether the

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product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

None of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the method including obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, automatically providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, none of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe calculating and data processing the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time, reference A describes reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls, reference B describes encompassing a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty, reference C describes receiving inquiries via the Web, and reference D describes

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switching a caller directly to the GE Service Center if a fix requires a trained service technician.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

When the recitations of Claim 24 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 19, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 24 likewise is patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

Claims 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, and 44 depend from independent Claim 28 which recites a system for enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the system including "at least one processor adapted to obtain product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment; and said at least one processor adapted to: provide to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information; determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

None of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system for enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the system including at least one processor adapted to obtain product information regarding a product from a user of the computing environment, and the at least one processor adapted to provide to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

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Moreover, none of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest at least one processor adapted to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe the DUDAS that calculates and data processes the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time, reference A describes the Answer Center that operates as a profit center by reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls, reference B describes the GE Consumer Service that encompasses a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty, reference C describes the GE Answer Center that receives inquiries via the web, and reference D describes the GE Service Center to which the caller is switched directly if a fix requires a trained service technician.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 28 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

When the recitations of Claims 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, and 44 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 28, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, and 44 likewise are patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

Claim 51 depends from independent Claim 46 which recites a system for enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the system including "means for obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; means

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for providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein the means for providing provides without interaction between the user and any other human being; means for determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and means for determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer”.

None of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest a system for enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the system including means for obtaining product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, means for providing from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where the means for providing provides without interaction between the user and any other human being, means for determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and means for determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, none of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest means for determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and means for determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe the DUDAS that calculates and data processes the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned

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services on a particular date or time, reference A describes the Answer Center that operates as a profit center by reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls, reference B describes the GE Consumer Service that encompasses a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty, reference C describes the GE Answer Center that receives inquiries via the web, and reference D describes the GE Service Center to which the caller is switched directly if a fix requires a trained service technician.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 46 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

When the recitations of Claim 51 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 46, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 51 likewise is patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

Claim 60 depends from independent Claim 55 which recites at least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of enabling scheduling a service call, the method including "obtaining product information regarding a product from a user, automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, a plurality of available appointments for scheduling a service call based on the product information, wherein automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being; determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

None of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest at least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions

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executable by the machine to perform a method of enabling scheduling a service call, the method including obtaining product information regarding a product from a user, automatically providing to the user, from whom the product information is obtained, a plurality of available appointments for scheduling a service call based on the product information, where automatically providing includes providing without interaction between the user and any other human being, determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, none of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest determining whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and determining whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe calculating and data processing the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time, reference A describes reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls, reference B describes encompassing a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty, reference C describes receiving inquiries via the Web, and reference D describes switching a caller directly to a GE Service Center if a fix requires a trained service technician.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 55 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

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When the recitations of Claim 60 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 55, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 60 likewise is patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

Claim 69 depends from independent Claim 64 which recites an article of manufacture including "at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising: computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information; computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product; and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, wherein the service provider is different than the manufacturer".

None of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest an article of manufacture including at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance, the computer readable program code means in the article of manufacture including computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information regarding a product at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network, computer readable program code means for causing

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a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the user that input the product information at the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information, computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer.

Moreover, none of Storch et al., reference A, reference B, reference C, or reference D, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a manufacturer of the product, and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to determine whether the product is serviced by a service provider if the product is not serviced by the manufacturer, where the service provider is different than the manufacturer. Rather, Storch et al. describe the DUDAS that calculates and data processes the information to maintain up-to-date records indicating the availability of qualified outside technicians to work any new requests for installation of nondesigned services on a particular date or time, reference A describes the Answer Center that operates as a profit center by reducing the number of in-warranty service calls, and increasing out-of-warranty calls, reference B describes the GE Consumer Service that encompasses a corp of 1,500 service technicians who do in-home repair of major appliances, both in-warranty and out-of warranty, reference C describes the GE Answer Center that receives inquiries via the web, and reference D describes the GE Service Center to which the caller is switched directly if a fix requires a trained service technician.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 64 is submitted to be patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

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When the recitations of Claim 69 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 64, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 69 likewise is patentable over Storch et al. in view of GE Answer Center.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, 44, 51, 60, and 69 be withdrawn.

Newly added Claim 73 depends from independent Claim 1, which is submitted to be in condition for allowance and patentable over the cited art. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 73 is also patentable over the cited art.

Newly added Claim 74 depends from independent Claim 19, which is submitted to be in condition for allowance and patentable over the cited art. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 74 is also patentable over the cited art.

Newly added Claim 75 depends from independent Claim 28, which is submitted to be in condition for allowance and patentable over the cited art. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 75 is also patentable over the cited art.

Newly added Claim 76 depends from independent Claim 46, which is submitted to be in condition for allowance and patentable over the cited art. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 76 is also patentable over the cited art.

Newly added Claim 77 depends from independent Claim 55, which is submitted to be in condition for allowance and patentable over the cited art. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 77 is also patentable over the cited art.

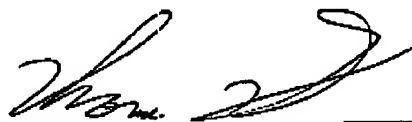
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Newly added Claim 78 depends from independent Claim 64, which is submitted to be in condition for allowance and patentable over the cited art. For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 78 is also patentable over the cited art.

In view of the foregoing remarks, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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